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APPEAL

Of the undersigned **MINISTERS** of the City of Montreal, to the **PEOPLE OF CANADA**, on the **PRESENT STATE** and **PROSPECTS** of the **UNIVERSITIES** and **COLLEGES** in **British North America**, established by **ROYAL CHARTER**, and supported by **PUBLIC FUNDS**.

FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,

We, the undersigned Ministers of Montreal, in pursuance of the important object which formed the ground of our late Memorial to the Governor General, which has been published in all the journals of this city, have felt it our duty, respectfully but earnestly, to call your attention to the peculiar condition of our higher Seminaries of Education, and to the imminent danger, if they are to be established and conducted under such auspices as the present, of the introduction of a sectarian spirit into their system of government and discipline.

We regard the subject of our present Appeal as one of paramount importance to this, and indeed to all the Colonies of Great Britain.

We had hoped, that after the settlement of the long agitated question of the Clergy Lands, we should not have been compelled, at least at so early a period, to protest against a course of proceeding in a matter of deep and universal interest to the present and to future generations in this Colony, calculated, as we fear, to revive the jealousies, and to renew the dissensions which appeared to have been happily set at rest.

We shall now submit with the utmost candour and frankness, without any reserve or extenuation, the grounds of our dissatisfaction and alarm at the course which, it seems, is now proposed to be followed out in the immediate organization of King's College, Toronto, and of M'Gill College, Montreal, and in the appointment, by the present Governors, of the professors of the most important branches of Academic Education.

While it is certainly desirable that these institutions should be called into active operation, with all convenient speed, we humbly conceive that it is of infinitely greater moment that nothing should be done with precipitation, or to suit the views and interests of a sect or party; that it is due to this great and enlightened country, and indispensably necessary to the credit and prosperity of these institutions, that they be commenced under the most favourable auspices, and if possible, without even the appearance or suspicion of a party or sectarian bias, that they may command the general confidence and approbation of the community, whose property they are, for whose benefit they have been professedly founded and endowed, and by whom they must in future be supported.

The fact, that they have been erected by Royal Charter, can in no respect, we conceive, alter the unquestionable right of the community to exact the utmost responsibility

from those who are charged with their organization and government, since it is not for a moment to be presumed that Her Majesty can have any other interest or desire, as a faithful trustee for behoof of all classes of her subjects in the Colony, than to render them, in the highest possible degree, acceptable to the whole community, and effective of their destined ends.

It has been asked, of what do we complain? Our prompt and decisive answer has been, and we adhere to it, thinking it neither irrelevant nor frivolous, that we have not confidence in those who have had, and, we believe, still hold the entire management of these institutions, with what responsibility or under what check we know not, and we presume the public are generally as ignorant as we are.

And why, it may be asked, have you not confidence in them? We answer with equal frankness, because some of them, at least, have avowed principles which must utterly deprive them of the confidence of all Protestants who do not hold that the Church of England has very peculiar and exclusive rights, of which she cannot be divested; and, if we believe them to be conscientious and honest in the principles which they profess, and in which they glory, we cannot say less, than that we deem them to be peculiarly unworthy of the confidence of the great body of Protestants of other denominations, as well as of the liberal and catholic minded Protestants of their own communion.

We emphatically proclaim our conviction, that men of this spirit and of these principles are the last to be entrusted, in such a country as this, with the control of education in any of its departments—least of all in the highest.

Are we asked for the proof? We appeal to their recorded language and proceedings throughout the lengthened struggle which distracted this Colony, and threatened to sever the bond of union with the Parent Country, until the late auspicious era, which has restored peace and unity, by depriving them of power, and by denouncing their principles.

Can we be expected to give our confidence to men whose principles place them in decided opposition to all Protestants who are without the pale of the Church of England, who denounce as schismatics or heretics, and scruple not to unchurch, all who do not subscribe to their notions of the exclusive Apostolic origin and character of their own sect?

To their peculiar tenets, ecclesiastical and religious, we should not have adverted, on this occasion, were it not necessary to expose the impolicy of putting into such hands the great interests of education in the Colony, and the utter unreasonableness of expecting that such institutions shall

command our confidence, while we have no better guarantee for their impartial and enlightened administration.

We do not wish it to be understood, that we would have even such men wholly excluded from place or power, but we must say, that we cannot think it politic or safe to give them an ascendant, in any department involving great public interests, on which their peculiar views and sectarian feelings have any bearing.

From the subjoined note, it will be seen that the Governors of King's College, in Canada West, and of M'Gill College, in Canada East, are men of whom some, and those too holding very prominent and influential places in their government, have forfeited the confidence of this community, a few of their own sect excepted, and though there may be among their assessors men of more enlarged and catholic spirit and principles, they are too few to be regarded as sufficient guarantees for the protection of our interests, and perhaps there is not one among them that any of us, had the privilege of such election been vouchsafed to us, would have chosen as his representative.

Is it not a fact that, with the unimportant exception of two or three, who happen to be members, in virtue of civil office, the Governors of King's and M'Gill Colleges, are of the communion of the Church of England? Is this doing justice to the Universities? To the country? Is it fair; is it respectful to the numerous bodies of other denominations? While the Clergymen of all other Protestant denominations and the public at large are, at this moment, in profound ignorance of what has been done, or of what is devised, who shall wonder that we hesitate to give a blind and implicit confidence to the measures, which such Governors may see fit to adopt, measures, too, which may produce lasting, and, it may be, very injurious consequences? Are two or three individuals, however respectable, sufficient to fulfil so high a trust, as the organization of great public institutions, which ought to be rendered equally open, acceptable and serviceable to all sects and parties?

KING'S COLLEGE, TORONTO.

Chancellor of the University:

His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir CHARLES BAGOT, G. C. B., Governor General of British North America.

Visitors:

The Honourable J. B. Robinson,
The Honourable Jas. B. Macaulay,
The Honourable J. Jones,
The Honourable J. McLean,
The Honourable C. A. Hagerman.

President:

The Right Rev. John Strachan, D. D. & LL. D., Lord Bishop of Toronto.

Council:

The Hon. R. S. Jameson,	The Hon. R. B. Sullivan,
The Hon. A. Cavellier,	The Hon. W. Allen,
The Hon. W. H. Draper,	The Hon. J. S. Macaulay,
The Rev. J. McCaul, LL. D.,	The Hon. L. F. Sherwood,
The Rev. H. J. Grassett, B. A.	

M'GILL COLLEGE, MONTREAL.

Governors:

His Excellency the Governor General,
The Chief Justice,
Dr. Strachan, Bishop of Toronto,
Dr. Bethune, Rector of Christ's Church.

Are we not all as much interested and as well entitled, as the members of the Church of England, to be consulted as to the constitution and modelling of them; and shall we not be permitted without the imputation of intrusiveness, to crave that the voice and the will of the great majority of Protestants in this Colony shall not be treated, as if it were of no account?

We see an advertisement for Professors and Tutors, emanating no doubt from the Governors of M'Gill College. Is it too bold to ask what are the number and qualifications of the judges and electors who are about to appoint men *after so short* a warning, to fill the Chairs of the University? Will the interests of literature and science be safe in their custody? Will this precipitation inspire confidence, or does it sugar well for the fame of this great school of letters? Will literary and moral qualifications be alone required of the candidates for office? Will not adherence to the Church of England compensate for inferior scholarship, and the absence of that adherence neutralize, in the opinion of such judges, the highest literary merits? Do the Governors not shrink from the responsibility which they must incur, and the unsparing scrutiny and censorship to which their present proceedings will most justly be subjected in the Colony and in the parent country?

Indeed we cannot allow ourselves to believe that the enlightened and liberal portion of our brethren who adhere to the Church of England will approve of such partial proceedings, because we cannot imagine them so blind and miscalculating, as to deem that the temporary possession of such exclusive power and influence, would not be bought at far too dear a price by setting them in a hostile attitude to the great body of their Protestant brethren in this Colony.

Is there not cause then for alarm? Is there not good ground for this Appeal? When we look around the various Colonies of British North America, what is the actual state of our Protestant Colleges? In what hands is their government vested? Are they fitted to inspire equal confidence in all classes and denominations of Her Majesty's loyal subjects? Is there no respect of persons or of creeds? Do they fulfil their ends in the most ample measure? Or, what is the cause that they are shorn of their power, lustre and influence, and the public deprived of the equal and full participation of their benefits? Is it to be tolerated at this day, and in this part of the British dominions, that these noble institutions should be cast in a party or sectarian mould, that they should be trammelled, dwarfed, drained of their vital power and spirit, paralyzed in their free and generous action, by a preposterous and antiquated illiberality? In fact, until these institutions throughout British North America shall have been effectually emancipated from the preponderant ascendancy of one sect or party, thrown open to the public, and their government made at least virtually responsible, it is not possible to entertain the shadow of a hope that they will fulfil their end and command public confidence.

In fine, we are persuaded that there never was a period when we had greater cause to distrust a party who it seems "have learned nothing and forgot nothing," amidst the many lessons and warnings which the recent troubles of this Colony have imparted, to all who are capable of profiting by experience, and so long as they continue to manifest a determination to maintain an undue influence in the conduct of our most important institutions, we must feel it our imperative duty to watch them closely and to guard the most sacred and precious rights of a free people; nor so long as their influence is allowed to predominate, is it possible for us to indulge the pleasing confidence that we may sit down secure against any infringement of interests, which it would be unpardonable in us to leave in jeopardy.

We cannot but regard, therefore, the present as another great crisis which has arisen in the history of this Colony, in which we are called once more to unite and co-operate, in order to enforce the practical and impartial carrying out, in the frame work and administration of all our public Institutions, of those principles of equal rights and liberty, and of that virtual responsibility to public opinion, which are the only sure guarantee of our future peace, freedom, and prosperity.

Under this persuasion, we conclude by recommending that the public, by every constitutional means, should now protest against, and thereby counteract, the pernicious influence of this party and sectarian spirit, which, if it be not now sternly and vigorously opposed, will not stop in its career, until it shall have perverted into merely party and sectarian schools, our Universities and Colleges, which if not immediately and effectively put down, will revive the unhappy dissensions from which we have just emerged, and obscure the fair prospects that are now opening to our country.

Is it too much to hope, that those who are now so blindly and precipitately urging this matter, may be induced by this Appeal to pause in a career, in which we are persuaded their ultimate defeat is inevitable? Nay more, we will venture to forewarn them, that should they actually succeed, victory will prove to them more injurious than defeat; for we are persuaded, that if these institutions are established upon a narrow basis, and governed in the spirit of a sect or party, they will forfeit the confidence and support of the great body of the people, will dwindle into mere private and

party establishments; new institutions, founded upon better principles and standing upon a broader basis, will speedily rise up to supersede, in all probability to overshadow and eclipse them; compelling them either to accommodate themselves to the wants and wishes of the country, or dooming them to languish and wither away, the just objects of general contempt and reprobation.

Representing, as we do, so many Christian communities, it is scarcely necessary distinctly to disclaim any hostile spirit towards the Church of England as such, and to avow our willingness, in all respects, to concede to the members of that community those equal rights to which, in common with ourselves, they are entitled.

We rejoice in the fact that that Church includes many towards whom we cherish most sincere fraternal love, and with whom we shall gladly co-operate in all that pertains to the glory of our common Lord and the best interests of our fellow-men.

WILLIAM SQUIRE,
Wesleyan Minister.

H. ESSON, A. M.
Minister of St. Gabriel Church.

W. TAYLOR,
Presbyterian Church, LaGauchetiere Street.

H. WILKES, A. M.
Minister of the Congregational Church.

BENJAMIN DAVIES, PH. D.,
President of the Baptist Theological Institution.

H. O. CROFTS,
Methodist Mew Connexion.

T. T. HOWARD,
Methodist New Connexion.

CALEB STRONG,
Minister of the American Presbyterian Church.

RICHARD T. HUTCHINSON,
Wesleyan Minister.

JOHN GIRDWOOD,
Minister of the Baptist Church.

J. J. CARRUTHERS,
Congregational Theological Professor.

Montreal, August 28, 1842.